



# COVID-19 and Mental Health of Indian Youth: Association with Background Variables and Stress

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**Abstract** The coronavirus has become a public health concern of the decade, affecting the economic, social, and psychological stability of the whole world. Having understood the detrimental impact of the pandemic to the mental health of people of all age groups, youth is understood to be the most vulnerable population who receives its direct impact. The broad objective was to study the mental health status of Indian youth and its association with various demographic variables. Psychological stress and mental health was another relationship that was explored. A group of 317 participants between the age group of 19 to 29 voluntarily took part in the online survey. Gender was found to be associated with overall mental health status ( $p < 0.01$ ) as well its correlates, namely anxiety ( $p < 0.05$ ), depression ( $p < 0.05$ ), and loss of behavioral control ( $p < 0.01$ ). Association between age and loss of positive affect ( $p < 0.05$ ), number of siblings and loss of behavioral control ( $p < 0.01$ ), and family environment and overall mental health scores ( $p < 0.001$ ) were found. Similarly, feeling of restlessness during lockdown ( $p < 0.001$ ), availability of support ( $p < 0.001$ ), and feeling the need to consult a mental health professional were associated with the overall mental health score as well as all its sub-scales. Further, there were strong negative correlations between psychological stress and overall mental health

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